

facilities for the care of our aging citizens. As a matter of fact, the first bill I signed into law after being elected Governor of Maryland created the State Commission on Problems of the Aging. And, since that time, we at the State level have taken an active interest in promoting those programs that are designed to improve the care received by our elderly citizens from both private and public sources.

It is my sincere belief that through the dedicated efforts of both private individuals and public officials, Maryland has earned the distinction of being an acknowledged leader among the states in maintaining high standards in nursing home care. Nursing homes in Maryland have thrived since the first licensing laws were enacted and the nursing home regulations that went into effect not too long ago have resulted in a further improvement of nursing home care.

I might add that these new regulations were formulated by State health officials in cooperation with representatives of the nursing home field. Without the splendid contributions of private nursing homes, it would be virtually impossible to continue to provide adequate care to our elderly citizens.

Nursing homes are adjuncts to and do much to complement the services provided by Maryland's three excellent chronic disease hospitals. They supply long term care after the acute stages of a disease and after the rehabilitation services have carried the patient to the point of maximum hospital benefits. I shudder to think of how many hospital beds might be unavailable to chronically ill patients if nursing homes did not exist.

I note that the nursing home we dedicate today — the House in the Pines — will eventually provide 88 beds and will be staffed by a professional group eventually to number between 60 and 65. This is indeed significant. Not only does it mean that 88 of our elderly citizens will receive excellent care here, but a number of other patients will have access to beds in chronic disease hospitals and therefore be able to receive adequate medical treatment.

I can assure you that your State government will continue to cooperate in such ventures as these in any way possible. We are, for example, constantly reviewing the rate of payments to nursing homes for public assistance cases. For example, since I became Governor these rates have been increased from \$110, \$115 and \$120 a month — depending on location — to \$135 a month. In addition, the budget I have proposed for the 1964 fiscal year includes \$250,000 to finance certain special services required for the adequate treatment and care of these patients.